

Press Release

New York, January 21. - A call for cessation of bombing in Vietnam, circulated by a group of Boston Area Professors, has been signed in 10 days by over 6000 faculty members of 200 Colleges and Universities in thirty seven states and several hundred other professional people.

The signatures, collected by an Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Vietnam, have been published in two full page ads in the New York Times, Sunday January 15 and January 22. The text of the statement reads simply: "MR. PRESIDENT, STOP THE BOMBING", and is surrounded in the advertisements by the surging crowd of names of the signers.

According to Professor Hilary Putnam of Harvard and Professor Salvador Luria of M.I.T., respectively Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer of the Ad Hoc Committee, the response to the informally circulated call for signatures has been unprecedented and almost overwhelming. Within hours of the appeal, hundreds of names were being called in from dozens of institutions, from the University of California at San Diego to the University of Maine, from Holy Cross College to the University of Utah. The names include political scientists, social scientists, Far Eastern experts, physicists, biologists, as well as humanists.

A similar appeal at Yale University brought 412 faculty signatures from Yale University alone to a statement asking for a cessation of the bombings as a step toward negotiations. This statement, as well as the one from the Boston group, has been forwarded to President Johnson.

A press conference was held in New York City on Saturday January 21, and was attended by representatives of academic groups in New York, New Haven, and Boston. Members of the Boston Area Faculty Group on Public Issues, the initiating group for the nationwide appeal, expressed the opinion that the response of their colleagues to the appeal, while limited specifically to the issue of Vietnam bombings, is indicative of a deep impatience among intellectuals and in the American people.

"How can a generation be raised and taught the values of civilization, while our pilots attack civilian populations in villages and cities, destroy rice fields, and burn women and children alive with napalm?" asked one of the professors.

"This war of extermination is making a mockery of education and of all the values claimed by our culture."

The protest against the bombings is only one step in a projected fight against the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, according to Professor Putnam. "Encouraged by the tremendous response to the appeal for a call to end the bombings, some of us look forward to extending the educators' struggle for peace to the political field if our appeal is not heeded by the Johnson administration.

"Many of us have traditionally been either Democrats or Independents bound to the Democratic Party in a traditional alliance. Most of us voted for Mr. Johnson in 1964. But some of us now feel that to put an end to the Vietnam war, new political approaches may be required and a much greater political independence should be pursued."

Among steps being considered are delegations to leading Republican politicians, such as Governor Romney, Senator Percy, and Senator Hatfield, whose approach to the Vietnam crisis makes them potential anti-war candidates in 1968.

"The academic community is obviously aroused by the inhumanity of this war. It may have to play an active role in provoking substantive debate and helping provide meaningful choices at the polls."